

NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



AS I SEE IT

Teacher Working Conditions Survey Offers Valuable Insight

October 15, 2009

When the Teacher Working Conditions Survey is given every other year, the results offer education leaders some unique opportunities for guiding school improvement to improve teaching and learning. That's why the State Board of Education continues to support the survey and included its results in the new evaluation instruments for educators. Since 2008 was the last survey year, 2009 is the year to take action and respond to what we've learned before the 2010 survey is administered March 15-April 16.

I encourage principals and superintendents to use the 2008 results to help guide improvements.

The data we have from the 2008 survey show us the key role the working conditions play in teaching and learning. With enough survey responses to give us valid data from every public school in North Carolina, here's what we learned:

- Time matters. The amount of time made available to teachers for planning and collaboration and the ability of teachers to focus on teaching without interruption and add-on duties was correlated to higher student achievement.
- Eight in 10 teachers at the highest performing elementary schools reported an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in their school. In the lowest performing schools, that number was six in 10.
- School leadership, facilities and resources were strong predictors of student learning.
- Teachers made decisions about where they wanted to teach and whether they were seeking a different teaching job based on how they viewed working conditions.
- Teachers who wanted to stay in their school were three times more likely to report that their school had an effective School Improvement Team and were twice as likely to report having a large role in school improvement planning.

Full results of the latest Teacher Working Conditions survey and resources to help you use the results are online at www.ncteachingconditions.org. These resources include:

- *The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey: Guide for School Improvement* was designed by the New Teacher Center to assist educational leaders in understanding and improving teaching and learning conditions in their schools and to link TWC results with School Improvement Planning efforts.
- *Moving Toward Coaching-Based Evaluation* was designed by the New Teacher Center to help principals and other leaders be strong coaches for teacher development and improvement. The NC Teacher Evaluation Instrument is centered on teacher development. This focus means that principal coaching of teachers is more important than ever. This document and toolkit help leaders understand the research-based characteristics of effective and systemic supervision models, conducting observations, providing constructive feedback, gathering artifacts and planning to contribute to the professional growth of teachers. This is available at www.ncteachingconditions.org. The tools are there for educators to use. The rewards can be tremendous for our teachers and their students.

Bill Harrison, Chairman
State Board of Education